

Claims

- [c1] 1. A system operating on a network for learning a language, the system comprising:
- a memory for storing a scenario having tasks to be carried out in the language;
- a connection manager for accepting a plurality of connections requested over the network from one or more user systems;
- a virtual reality subsystem for representing the scenario in a physical setting in a user interface operating on each user system connected to the learning system;
- a communication subsystem for providing at least one channel over which users of the user systems communicate text when carrying out the tasks in the language;
- a set of linguistic tools for receiving and disambiguating an identified term in specified text received from one of the connected user systems; and
- a search subsystem for retrieving information on the network related to the specified text;
- wherein the set of linguistic tools disambiguates the identified term in the information retrieved by the search subsystem to identify example uses having a meaning similar to the identified term in the specified text to aid the users of the user systems to comprehend the text communicated in the language over the at least one channel.
- [c2] 2. The system according to claim 1, wherein each user of the learning system is assigned an account with a profile to access the learning system from their user system operating on the network.
- [c3] 3. The system according to claim 2, wherein the search system selects information sources and filters search results using the profile of the users operating the user systems connected to the learning system.
- [c4] 4. The system according to claim 2, wherein the scenario is customized in accordance with the profile of the users operating the user systems connected to the learning system.
- [c5] 5. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a language quesser for

filtering out text communicated using the communication subsystem that is other than in the language.

[c6] 6. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a language guesser for filtering out search results that are other than in the language.

[c7] 7. The system according to claim 1, wherein one of the set of linguistic tools measures a language level of text communicated over the at least one channel.

[c8] 8. The system according to claim 7, wherein a user identified as a tutor is warned when the measure of social behavior over the at least one channel is below a predefined minimum level.

[c9] 9. The system according to claim 7, wherein the communication subsystem filters text over the at least one channel having a measured social behavior below a predefined minimum level.

[c10] 10. The system according to claim 1, wherein the set of linguistic tools disambiguates the identified term in the information retrieved by the search subsystem to identify example uses having a meaning dissimilar to the identified term in the specified text.

[c11] 11. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a recommender subsystem for receiving recommendations from and distributing those recommendations to selected ones of the users operating the user systems connected to the learning system.

[c12] 12. The system according to claim 1, wherein the communication subsystem invokes a chat window on the user interface on each user system connected to the learning system for displaying text communicated by users that are proximate to each other in the representation of the physical setting.

[c13] 13. The system according to claim 1, wherein the set of linguistic tools comprises one or more of a spell checker, a thesaurus, a morphological analyzer, a contextual disambiguator, a sense disambiguator, and term extractor.

- [c14] 14. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a converter for converting audio to text for transmission over the communication subsystem.
- [c15] 15. The system according to claim 1, wherein the set of linguistic tools sense disambiguates the identified term in the specified text.
- [c16] 16. The system according to claim 1, wherein the set of linguistic tools syntactically disambiguates the identified term in the specified text.
- [c17] 17. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a session database for recording session history of the tasks of the scenario carried out by the users operating the user systems connected to the learning system.
- [c18] 18. The system according to claim 17, wherein the session history provides a measure of one of user language ability and user capacity for carrying out assigned tasks.
- [c19] 19. A method for learning a language using a system operating on a network, the method performed at the system comprising:
storing in a memory a scenario having tasks to be carried out in the language;
accepting a plurality of connections requested over the network from one or more user systems;
representing the scenario in a physical setting in a user interface operating on each user system connected to the learning system;
providing at least one channel over which users of the user systems communicate text when carrying out the tasks in the language;
receiving and disambiguating an identified term in specified text received from one of the connected user systems; and
retrieving information on the network related to the specified text;
wherein said receiving and disambiguating further comprises disambiguating the identified term in the information retrieved to identify example uses having a meaning similar to the identified term in the specified text to aid the users of the user systems to comprehend the text communicated in the language over the at least one channel.
- [c20] 20. An article of manufacture for use in a machine comprising:

a) a memory;

b) instructions stored in the memory for operating a system on a network for learning a language, the instructions being machine readable by the system and performing a method, the method comprising:

storing in a memory a scenario having tasks to be carried out in the language;

accepting a plurality of connections requested over the network from one or more user systems;

representing the scenario in a physical setting in a user interface operating on each user system connected to the learning system;

providing at least one channel over which users of the user systems communicate text when carrying out the tasks in the language;

receiving and disambiguating an identified term in specified text received from one of the connected user systems; and

retrieving information on the network related to the specified text;

wherein said receiving and disambiguating further comprises disambiguating the identified term in the information retrieved to identify example uses having a meaning similar to the identified term in the specified text to aid the users of the user systems to comprehend the text communicated in the language over the at least one channel.